(c) whether panel has pointed out that the policy was not people friendly and even Supreme Court has commented adversely on it;

(d) if so, whether the Court had also refused to permit operationalisation of drug price control order under the new policy; and

(e) by when final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA): (a) to (e) The Standing Committee on Petroleum and Chemicals in its Fortieth Report (13th Lok Sabha) on 'Demands for Grants 2003-2004 relating to Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals' had recommended to the Government, *inter alia*, "to have a re-look at the new Policy and endeavour to make it widely acceptable and free of legal lacunae". Further, the Committee in its Fifty First Report recommended that the Government should have relook at this policy to make it people friendly. In its reply to the Committee the Government has informed its stand that the policy is balanced and rational and needs no change at present.

The Government announced the 'Pharmaceutical Policy 2002' in February, 2002. However, a public interest litigation filed in the High Court of Karnataka at Bangalore resulted in an Order dated 12-11-02 which stopped the Government from implementing the price control regime of the Pharmaceutical Policy 2002. This Department filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) before the Supreme Court of India against the Order of the Karnataka High Court, which has been admitted as SLP (C) No. 3668/2003. The Supreme Court *vide* its order dated 10-3-2003 directed the Government, *interalia*, to "consider and formulate appropriate criteria for ensuring essential and life saving drugs not to fall out of the price control and further directed to review drugs, which are essential and life saving in nature till 2nd May, 2003". Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has brought out the National List of Essential Medicines, 2003 after the review of the National Essential Drugs List, 1996.

World Bank study on pollution level in Ganga river

*78. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether as per a study sponsored by the World Bank, the pollution level in the Ganga river continue to be alarmingly high Contributing to nearly 12 per cent of the total disease burden in the State of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to reduce the pollution of the river to the minimum index level set by the National Science Foundation; and

(d) the other major findings of the World Bank evaluation study and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) to (d) According to the draft report of the World Bank sponsored study on the 'State of Environment Report and Action Plan for Uttar Pradesh' of August, 2002 on the water quality of the river Ganga in the Uttar Pradesh stretch of the river, the Water Quality Index as per an index developed by the National Sanitation Foundation of the United States, was below 42 for the period 1995-2001 on a 0-100 scale. The study does not attribute the disease burden reported to the water quality of the river Ganga alone.

Government has been aware of the pollution of the river Ganga well before the World Bank study was carried out. In order to address this problem, Government launched the Ganga Action Plan in 1986. Under the Ganga Action Plan and subsequent action plans for its tributaries, currently 1645 million litres per day of sewage is being intercepted, diverted and treated. On completion of the on-going phase of the Ganga Action Plan by the year 2007, a total amount of 2381 million litres per day of sewage shall be intercepted, diverted and treated. As per the water quality monitoring reports of the Ministry carried out through different reputed institutions, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown significant improvement in Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD). However, faecal coliform levels of the river continue to be high in relation to water quality standards for bathing, in the stretch from Kanpur downstream.

The World Bank sponsored study has utilized the Water Quality Index developed by the National Sanitation Foundation of the United States.

This Index is not widely accepted as it is subjective, does not provide use based risk and has other limitations. The study also does not report individual parameters used for the index in respect of which Indian water quality standards have been notified.

The other major findings of the World Bank sponsored study broadly relate to water shortages and flooding, urban outdoor air pollution, indoor air pollution, solid waste, land degradation and forest & biodiversity loss. Government is addressing these problems through the enforcement of various statutory provisions and through programmes implemented by different departments.

Consideration of Disinvestment of NFL

*79. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the consideration of disinvestment of National Fertilizer Ltd. has been put-off for two years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) was Government able to secure bids for reserve price; and

(d) if not, steps being taken to improve the performance of NFL to attract better offers?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

(c) Reserve price of National Fertilizers Ltd. (NFL) has not been finalized.

(d) Does not arise in view of reply to (c) above.

Public Sector investment in agriculture production

*80. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the agriculture production in the country is showing a downward trend since 1991 particularly after 1996-97;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Public Sector investment in agriculture declined considerably during this period;